

Message Text

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R 051653Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4860

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USMISSION USUN

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1734

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AL, MO, SP, SS, UN

SUBJ: SAHARA: AFTERMATH OF SPANISH WITHDRAWAL

REF: MADRID 1546

SUMMARY: GOS INTENTIONALLY WITHHELD SUPPORT FOR FEB 26 MOROCCAN-STAGED UNANIMOUS APPROVAL BY LOCAL SAHARAN ASSEMBLY (YEMAA) OF "REINTEGRATION" OF TERRITORY INTO MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA. FORMER MINISTER OF PRESIDENCY, CARRO MARTINEZ, WHO PLAYED KEY ROLE IN FINAL DENOUEMENT IN OCT-NOV 1975, GAVE WELL-ATTENDED PUBLIC LECTURE MARCH 1 DEFENDING GOS SAHARAN POLICY. LECTURE WAS MARRED BY LENGTHY INTERVENTION BY ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR AND PROTESTS OVER THE INTERVENTION FROM MOROCCAN MINISTER/COUNSELOR. FAILURE OF MOROCCAN FISHING CHIEF TO SHOW UP FOR SCHEDULED MEETING IN MADRID FEB 26-27 SUGGESTS THAT MOROCCO MAY RECIPROCATATE GOS REFUSAL TO SUPPORT ITS PREFERRED FORM FOR SAHARAN TAKEOVER BY DRAGGING ITS FEET IN BILATERAL PROJECTS PROPOSED AS PART OF OVERALL SAHARAN SETTLEMENT.

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END SUMMARY.

1. SPANISH GOVERNOR ATTENDED FIRST PART OF FEB 26 LOCAL SAHARAN ASSEMBLY (YEMAA) MEETING DURING WHICH HE READ THE TEXT OF THE UNDERSTANDINGS REACHED IN MADRID, NOV 14,1975, WITH MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA WITH RESPECT TO THEIR PARTICIPATION IN TEMPORARY ADMINISTRATION OF TERRITORY. ACCORDING TO MFA, GOVERNOR DID NOT STAY FOR FOLLOWING CEREMONY IN WHICH YEMAA VOICED ITS UNANIMOUS APPROVAL OF "REINCORPORATION" WITH MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA. THERE WERE MANY LAST-MINUTE EFFORTS TO BRING GOS AROUND TO ACQUIESCE IN MOROCCAN-INSPIRED FORMALITIES BUT GOS INSISTED THAT AS LONG AS SAHARANS HAD NOT BEEN PROPERLY CONSULTED ABOUT THEIR FUTURE IN THE PRESENCE OF A UN OFFICIAL, SPAIN COULD NOT AGREE THAT THE DECOLONIZATION PROCESS HAD BEEN PROPERLY CONCLUDED (REFTEL).

2. AN AUDIENCE OF SOME 400 MARCH 1 HEARD FORMER MINISTER OF THE PRESIDENCY, CARRO MARTINEZ (AN INTIMATE OF PRIME MINISTER ARIAS), DESCRIBE EVOLUTION OF GOS POLICY TOWARDS SAHARA. HIS PRESENTATION AMOUNTED TO APOLOGIA FOR GOS POLICY WHICH HE SAID SUCCEEDED IN EXTRICATING SPAIN FROM AN INTOLERABLE AND HOPELESS SITUATION WITHOUT BLOODSHED, HARM TO COHESION OF THE ARMED FORCES, OR REPERCUSSIONS ON INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION. CARRO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SPAIN WAS LATE IN MOVING TERRITORY TOWARDS SELF-DETERMINATION BUT LAID RESPONSIBILITY FOR POSTPONEMENT OF PLANNED REFERENDUM IN EARLY 1975 AT DOORSTEP OF MOROCCO AND UN. ARABS WHO HAD EARLIER AGREED ON SELF-DETERMINATION AND SPAIN'S EARLY DEPARTURE FROM SAHARA SAYING THAT THEY COULD ARRANGE A SOLUTION AMONG THEMSELVES, ENDED UP BY DISAGREEING ON SELF-DETERMINATION WITH ONE SIDE SEEKING TO PREVENT A REFERENDUM AND THE OTHER PROMOTING AN INSURGENCY IN THE TERRITORY. MOROCCO'S "GREEN MARCH," WHICH CARRO DESCRIBED AS "A CAMOUFLAGED MILITARY AGGRESSION," BROUGHT THINGS TO A HEAD. WITH NO REAL HELP FROM THE ARABS OR THE UN AT ANY TIME DURING THE CRISIS, SPAIN HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO CARRY OUT ITS INTENTION--COMMUNICATED TO THE UN MAY 23,1975--TO WITHDRAW UNILATERALLY IF PEACEFUL DECOLONIZATION WERE NO LONGER POSSIBLE. THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY "UNILATERAL SPANISH DECLARATION"-THE SO-CALLED MADRID TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT- TO WHICH MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA SUBSCRIBED IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE AS ADMINISTRATING POWERS IN FINAL

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3-MONTH PHASE OF SPANISH PRESENCE.

3. ATTENDING ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR KHALED TOOK THE FLOOR IN THE QUESTION PERIOD TO PERORATE ON ALLEGED INACCURACIES IN CARRO'S PRESENTATION. BEFORE HE COULD FINISH, MOROCCAN MINISTER-COUNSELOR, CHERKAOU, ROSE AND BEGAN PROTESTING IN FRENCH. AFTER CHAIRMAN RESTORED ORDER, CARRO BRIEFLY REBUTTED ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR'S REMARKS CONCLUDING WITH STATEMENT THAT SHARAN

ISSUE HAD NOT BEEN RESOLVED BUT "IS NOW IN YOUR HANDS" AS HE
FIXEDLY FOCUSED ON ALGERIAN AND MOROCCAN REPS. THIS WAS GREETED
BY SPONTANEOUS APPLAUSE. ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR
LATER TOLD EMBOFF THAT AS HE LEFT THE HALL, SOME SPANIARDS
CONGRATULATED HIM FOR TAKING THE FLOOR TO DEFEND RIGHTS OF
SHARANS.

4. FOR THE SECOND TIME THE MOROCCAN DIRGEN FOR FISHERIES, WHO
WAS SCHEDULED TO MEET WITH HIS SPANISH COUNTERPART IN MADRID,
FAILED TO SHOW UP FEB 26-27. THERE IS CONCERN IN THE MFA
(WELL-FOUNDED WE SUSPECT) THAT THE SPANISH-MOROCCAN UNDERSTANDING
REACHED DURING THE MADRID TALKS IN MID-NOVEMBER 1975
MIGHT RUN INTO SNAGS BECAUSE OF GOS UNWILLINGNESS TO UNDERWRITE
THE FORM OF MOROCCO'S TAKEOVER IN THE SAHARA. THESE UNDERSTANDINGS
INCLUDED AN OPTION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A
PHOSPHATE DEPOSIT IN SOUTHERN MOROCCO (NOT BU CRAA), THE
CONSTRUCTION OF A 1 MILLION TON STEEL PLANT AND A LEAD AND
COPPER SMELTER, ASSISTANCE IN PREPARING A GEOLOGICAL MAP OF
MOROCCO, AND SOME UNSPECIFIED CHEMICAL PROJECTS. IN THE ABSENCE
OF A SETTLEMENT OF OUTSTANDING GOS DEMANDS FOR
INDEMNIFICATION OF CONFISCATED OR NATIONALIZED SPANISH INTERESTS
THE GOS MAY ALSO BE DRAGGING ITS FEET ON THE NEW ECONOMIC
PROPOSALS UNTIL SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE WITH THE GOM
ON COMPENSATIONS.

5. COMMENT: CARRO IS THE FIRST PROMINENT SPANIARD TO HAVE USED
SUCH HARSH LANGUAGE PUBLICLY WHEN REFERRING TO THE ARAB COUNTRIES
LACK OF COOPERATION IN DECOLONIZATION EFFORT. THE INCIDENT
WITH THE ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR AND THE MOROCCAN COUNSELOR
ILLUSTRATE THE IMPACT OF SAHARAN DEVELOPMENTS ON SPAIN'S
RELATIONS WITH THESE TWO COUNTRIES. MFA OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD
US THAT THEY WANT TO MAINTAIN AS FRIENDLY RELATIONS AS
POSSIBLE WITH BOTH COUNTRIES; MOROCCO IN PARTICULAR WOULD LIKE
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TO HAVE SPAIN TAKE SIDES. IT IS QUITE
LIKELY THAT CARRO'S LECTURE COORDINATED IN ADVANCE WITH THE GOS
WHICH WANTS TO PUT THE BEST LIGHT POSSIBLE DOMESTICALLY AND
EXTERNALLY ON ITS SAHARAN POLICY.
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